

## THE MANHAJ TARBIYAH RĀBI‘AH AL-‘ADAWĪYAH APPROACH USED IN OVERCOMING DEPRESSION

<sup>1</sup> Nur Izzati Ahmad (Corresponding Author) & <sup>2</sup>Ab Rahman, Z.

**Abstract:** Newspapers had lately highlighted the increasing number of mental health problem cases, especially depression. Thus, several studies intended to examine the use of spiritual methods to overcome the problem of depression. However, no study has yet to investigate the use of the Manhaj Tarbiyah approach by Rābi‘ah al-‘Adawīyah, a Sufi figure, to investigate depression. This study aims to scientifically examine the Manhaj Tarbiyah Rābi‘ah al-‘Adawīyah approach applied when dealing with the problem of depression. This qualitative study used the content analysis method to analyse documents, such as newspaper reports, manuscripts, journals and review articles related to the use of the Rābi‘ah al-‘Adawīyah teaching method when dealing with depression. The contents were analysed to identify the elements in the Rābi‘ah al-‘Adawīyah Manhaj Tarbiyah approach. A literature review found that this approach, which was in the form of poetry, was successful in overcoming depression.

**Keywords:** Depression, The Manhaj Tarbiyah Rābi‘ah al-‘Adawīyah Approach, Sufi, poetry

### 1.0 Introduction

Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas (2022), in the third edition of his book entitled "*Some Aspects of Sufism as Understood and Practiced Among the Malays*", mentioned how one of the most famous Islamic Sufi scholars, Rābi‘ah al-‘Adawīyah (185/801 C.E.), a freed slave in Basrah, had become famous for her teachings on the love of Allah SWT, which was later fully developed into the Sufi Divine Love Doctrine. This view is similar to that of Ida Faridatul Hasanah and Fitriyah (2020), who mentioned it in "*The Concept of Sufi Teachings: A Comparative Study of the Thoughts of Al-Ghazali and Rābi‘ah al-‘Adawīyah*". This study shows that the most important teaching of Rābi‘ah al-‘Adawīyah is the theory of *mahabbah* and according to various opinions, she was the first person to teach *hubb* (love) with a specific content and understanding in Sufism. Her true love for Allah SWT is the pinnacle of her Sufism teachings, which are expressed through her classic poems.

Wan Hilmi and Hidayah (2020) found that depression is a mental disorder, as described in modern medicine. This disorder can lead to suicidal tendencies and render a

---

<sup>1</sup> Master Student, Research Centre for Theology & Philosophy, Faculty of Islamic Studies UKM Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia. Email: p117675@siswa.ukm.edu.my.

<sup>2</sup> Senior Lecturer, Research Centre for Theology & Philosophy, Faculty of Islamic Studies UKM Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia, Email: zaizul@ukm.edu.my

person's life unproductive. According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (2017), more than 7 million people in the United States were found to have experienced major depression and if left unchecked, this will spread like cancer and damage the mind and thinking patterns of society.

Depression is a disorder that involves changes in thinking, emotions, feelings and behaviour that makes a person's daily life difficult and if left untreated, it will have a negative impact on the individual and society. It is natural for humans to feel various kinds of sensations or emotions, such as failure, sadness, worry and despair, but if the feelings or emotions are excessive and prolonged, it can lead to severe mental health problems. Nur Ashidah Yahya and Fariza Md Sham (2020) found depression to have existed since ancient times and if not dealt properly, it can lead to more serious mental issues. The concept of depression exerts that it occurs as a result of prolonged feelings of sadness. The symptoms of depression experienced by an individual need to be dealt with early because it can affect the quality of life and lead to self-harm or suicidal tendencies.

Numerous studies have examined the life history of Rābi‘ah al-‘Adawīyah and her concept of Divine Love, hence, this current study intended to examine the psychological aspects of Rābi‘ah's life, specifically to one mental health disorder, namely depression. Even until today, her life and teachings remain an interesting topic of research because they are full of wisdom and useful lessons in life. This is especially so when it is linked to the current state of world affairs, where humans are embroiled in a materialistic lifestyle, while ignoring basic moral values. Such a life practice will not only lead to self-inflicted harm, such as in the form of a restless soul, and, but it will also have negative effects on others. Thus, the study of Rābi‘ah al-‘Adawīyah's life is still relevant to be discussed. The life she experienced through the greatness of her love for Allah SWT in order to achieve *ma'rifah* (mystical knowledge about God or higher realities) Allah SWT can be used to reflect on life presently and in the future. One very valuable lesson in relation to psychology that she taught was how to create a peaceful and tranquil soul, as well as garner true happiness through one's religion.

Based on previous research and online (website) data, there is no study that has focused on the application of the Rābi‘ah al-‘Adawīyah teaching method to deal with depression. A study similar to this current study by Che Zarrina Saari (2007) only examined the Sufi concept advocated by Rābi‘ah al-‘Adawīyah as a motivational aspect in human life. Therefore, based on the study and problems above, a study that focuses on '*The Manhaj Tarbiah Rābi‘ah al-‘Adawīyah Approach in Dealing with Depression*' needs to be conducted. This current study aimed to show how the *Manhaj Tarbiah Rābi‘ah al-‘Adawīyah* approach can be used for dealing with depression through the appreciation of her works, which are in the form of poems and supplications (*doa*), as well as scientific information about her life.

This qualitative study aimed to achieve one objective, which is to identify the *Manhaj Tarbiah Rābi‘ah al-‘Adawīyah* concept applied in efforts to overcome depression.

The content analysis method was used to collect data through library research or also known as ‘arm chair research’. It is based on the *maktabi* (library) method, where the search for information and data is more focused on printed materials, especially books and classic texts, as well as analysing documents, such as newspaper reports, manuscripts, journals and review articles related to Rābi‘ah al-‘Adawīyah’s curriculum used for overcoming depression. Content analysis is an analytical study of terms, texts, concepts etc. contained in printed materials, such as books, books, journals, newspapers, written reports and the like.

When examining a person's religious life, the first thing to notice is what is visibly displayed in the person’s daily religious behaviour, which is the actual reflection of a person’s thoughts and feelings. Rābi‘ah al-‘Adawīyah, on the other hand, has highlighted a very transparent religious experience through Divine love presented throughout her life. Thus, her experience provides motivation for people during her time and after her to live a religious life. Hence, arises a question, “what is the teaching method used by Rābi‘ah al-‘Adawīyah that gives rise to such a religious experience that manifests itself in various forms”.

Siti Jamiaah (2020) concluded that ‘*manhaj*’ refers to a clear and bright path for carrying out or implementing an action or work, or a way or method of doing something systematically. ‘*Tarbiyah*’ is Arabic meaning education<sup>3</sup>, whereas the person who educates is called *murabbī*. Tarbiyah is a process of educating someone with Islamic knowledge and thoughts, and implementing what has been learned in daily life. Tarbiyah is not just about theory or thought, but also includes practical aspects, whereby one practices Islam in a perfect manner.<sup>4</sup> After determining the *manhaj tarbiyah* based on Rābi‘ah al-‘Adawīyah’s experience, then depression can be researched and better understood.

The results of this study can be used as input material for educational purposes, especially for those interested in studying the Sufi lifestyle. In addition, Rābi‘ah’s life, which was full of wisdom and religious experience, can be used as an example for others to emulate and enrich their spiritual vision. In relation to psychology, the results of this study will be tabiya channelled for human development in fields related to morality, ethics and Sufism-based mental-spirituality. Moreover, this study can positively contribute to the general development of knowledge for religion, nation and country.

## 2.0 A Brief Background of Rābi‘ah al-‘Adawīyah

Rābi‘ah al-‘Adawīyah, or Rābi‘ah al-‘Adawīyya al-Qaysiyya, is a famous Sufi saint. She was named Rābi‘ah because she was the fourth child out of three siblings. She was born in Basrah around 95H or 99H/713M or 717M (Wasalmi, 2014). Che Zarrina Saari (2007) stated that Rābi‘ah al-‘Adawīyah was also called 'Umm al-Khayr but scholars disagreed

<sup>3</sup>Tarbiyah originates from three different verbs, namely Rabā-Yarbū (*namā-yanmū*), which means to grow, Rabiya-Yarbā (*nasya'a, tara'ra'a*), which means to grow, and Rabbā-Yarubbū (*aṣlahahū, tawallā amrahū, sāsa'ahū, wa qāma 'alaihi, wa rā'ahū*), which means improving, managing, leading, looking after and maintaining it (educating). Refer to the origin of the word tarbiyah in the website <http://www.muis.gov.sg/webpub/warita/warita1-98/desk.html>.

<sup>4</sup> For a definition of *tarbiyah*, refer to <http://www.muis.gov.sg/webpub/warita/warita1-98/desk.html>.

about her year of birth. Some believe that she was born in 95H/713M, while others claim it was 96H/714M and yet some believe she was born in 99H/717M. The discrepancy in the year of birth was because of the lack of accurate and reliable sources of information pertaining to Rābi‘ah’s year or date of birth. In addition, she did not leave any written document that could indicate her date of birth. However, it is known that she came from a poor but pious family and grew up in her hometown.

As narrated by her biographer, Rābi‘ah's life since childhood was often riddled with bad omens, but she had shown a high degree of resilience. When she was a slave, Rābi‘ah once prayed to Allah 'Azza wa Jalla, which read as follows ('Ubaidillah Syariff, 2002):

*Lord, I am an orphan stranded in torment,  
insulted and trampled upon<sup>5</sup>  
I am now shackled and enslaved  
My freedom was taken away  
I will bear all the pain  
I patiently accept and soldier on*

She and his family lived in poverty where her father only owned a small boat, which was used to earn his livelihood, and Rābi‘ah often followed her father to help earn a living. From a young age, Rābi‘ah often observed how her father worshiped Allah SWT by reading the Qur'an and chanting praises (*zikr*) to Allah SWT. In fact, she also practiced what her had seen and heard from his father. Indirectly, these acts of worship had shaped her noble character and mature thinking (Che Zarrina Saari 2007).

Just like the date of her birth, the date of Rābi‘ah's death cannot be precisely ascertained due to disagreement among researchers. Some say she died in 135H and some say in 185H. However, they unanimously agree about her place of burial, which is in the city of Basrah, because there is evidence that her grave is located there. However, most researchers are more inclined to admit that she died in 185H based on the fact that Rābi‘ah was friends with Riyah bin 'Amr al-Qaysi, a Sufi figure who died in 180H. Rābi‘ah also met, had discussions and became friends with Sufya al-Thawri, who came to Basrah after 155H and she was also courted by the Governor of Basrah, Muhammad bin Sulayman al-Hashimi, who ruled Basrah from 145H-172H (Che Zarrina Saari, 2007).

### **3.0 Lessons on Loving Allah SWT by Rābi‘ah al-‘Adawīyah**

The Sufi teachings advocated by Rābi‘ah is known as *al-Mahabbah*. It is a continuation of the level of ascetic life developed by Hasan al-Basri, which was fear and hope, then expanded by Rābi‘ah into asceticism based on love ('Ubaidillah Syariff, 2002). Pure love is of a higher level compared to fear and hope.

Rābi‘ah is synonymous with the concept of *mahabbah*. This is evident from her answer to a question. Abu 'Ubaidillah Syariff, in his work entitled “*Rabi'ah al-'Adawiyah Sufi Women and the Aroma of Divine Love*” had quoted:

Rabi'ah al-'Adawiyyah was asked:

*“What are your views on love?”*

Rabi'ah al-'Adawiyyah replied:

*“It is difficult to explain what the essence of love is. It only indicates a longing of the image of a feeling. Only those who feel it will know it. How is it possible to describe something that you yourself have lost in His presence, even though your existence is still there, because your happy heart has made your tongue numb”*

According to Rābi‘ah, love is difficult to define because love relates to feelings of longing for a loved one. Hence, she made a conclusion through her very famous poem, as mentioned below:

*I love you with two loves  
Love for me and love for You  
Love for me is a situation  
always remembering You  
Love because of You is Your situation  
Move the curtain until You see  
Either for this or for that  
Praise is not for me  
The praise is all for You’*

Al-Ghazali, in his book *Ihya' 'Ulumiddin*, had elaborately discussed love (*mahabbah*). In the discussion, Imam al-Ghazali commented on Rābi‘ah’s poem and the division of love. Commenting on the poem, al-Ghazali said that perhaps what is meant by love is the pleasure (*hubb al-hawa*) or the impulse of the heart when loving Allah SWT because of the goodness and pleasures (the pleasure of remembering Him) that Allah SWT had bestowed on Rābi‘ah. Meanwhile, the second form of love that Rābi‘ah showers on Allah SWT is caused by His essence, which deserves love, since His Beauty and Majesty had been a revelation to Rābi‘ah (‘Ubaidillah Syariff, 2002).

#### **A.The Manhaj Tarbiyah Rābi‘ah al-‘Adawīyah Approach Used in Overcoming Depression**

Based the reminders that already exist in the Islamic religion, in reality though, what a person produces through an act or behaviour is actually related to the state of a person's heart, according to what Nu'man bin Bashir said, “I heard the Prophet SAW utter”....

*”أَلَا وَإِنَّ فِي الْجَسَدِ مُضَغَةً إِذَا صَلَحَتْ صَلَحَ الْجَسَدُ كُلُّهُ  
وَإِذَا فَسَدَتْ فَسَدَ الْجَسَدُ كُلُّهُ أَلَا وَهِيَ الْقَلْبُ.“*

Meaning: “*There is a piece of flesh in the body, if it becomes good (reformed) the whole body becomes good, but if it gets spoilt the whole body gets spoilt and that is the heart*”<sup>6</sup>

A person’s actions are caused by some indication from the heart. The hadith above can be associated with someone who is suffering from depression, either caused by a family problem or a traumatic incident. This is evident based on the ravaged body of a person suffering from a mental health problem, such as the mismanagement of oneself, which is usually caused by something troubling that person. According to al-Balkhi<sup>7</sup>, an imbalance soul can create anger, anxiety, sadness, and other psychological symptoms (Purmansyah Ariadi, 2013).

The *Manhaj Tarbiah Rābi‘ah al-‘Adawīyah* approach, which is used in dealing with depression, had played a major role in overcoming depression in Rābi‘ah, which is dealing with the most basic thing related to the heart. *Manhaj Tarbiyah Rābi‘ah al-‘Adawīyah*, which also refers to the power of love for Allah SWT (*Hubbul Ilahi*), is related to the heart and ultimately results in care, nurturing and education (*tarbiyah*) of those struggling with depression. These features were identified based on Rabi'ah's thoughts and beliefs through the following approaches listed below.

## **B. Allah SWT as the Main Aim in Life**

‘Ubaidillah Syariff (2002) also stated that the main characteristic of a Sufi is the persistent effort to reach *Makrifatullah*. The whole life is deployed towards achieving the ultimate goal, which is to meet the one most beloved, namely Allah SWT. Hence, due the nature of the goal in life, various efforts are extended to achieve it. In Rābi‘ah al-‘Adawīyah’s teachings about the love of Allah SWT (*mahabbatullah*), *khauf* was upgraded to the love of Allah SWT, which greatly fosters appreciation and understanding for the Sufis in the years after her.

‘Ubaidillah Syariff (2002) also recited one of Rābi‘ah’s poems:

*“Oh my joy, my goal and my hope  
You are the spirit of my heart  
You have given me happiness  
Longing for you, you are my source  
If not for looking for You  
I would not have explored these vast lands  
How abundant are the blessings of Your grace?  
Love for you is the goal of my life.”*

---

<sup>6</sup> Narrations by al-Bukhari (52) and Muslim (1599).

<sup>7</sup> Abu Zayd Ahmed ibn Sahl Balkhi was a Persian Muslim polymath: a geographer, mathematician, physician, psychologist and scientist. Al-Balkhi is believed to have been the first to determine that mental illness can have psychological and physiological causes and he was the first to typify four types of emotional disorders, namely fear and anxiety, anger and aggression, sadness and depression, as well as obsessions.

In Rābi‘ah al-‘Adawīyah's poem above, especially aimed at those suffering from depression, she tries to teach the true purpose of human life and answers the question by simply positioning Allah SWT as the main goal in life and always pin one's goals and hopes only on Him.

Al-Ghazali stated that the main purpose of human life is to form greater attachment to Allah SWT. It does not matter what field of study or knowledge we have mastered; it is all meant for one purpose, which is to form greater attachment to Allah SWT. Hence, it reminds humans to be always extremely cautious of today (Farid al-Din Attar, 2015).

Therefore, when a person feels that he has lost the only place he can depend on, feels very disappointed with the ups and downs of life, or feels that there is no longer a purpose in life, then he needs to try to appreciate the real purpose of his life as a servant of Allah SWT, which is to form a greater attachment with Allah SWT. Thus, if there is a repeated and continuous appreciation shown, a person will eventually develop a peaceful heart again because even if humans abandon him or hurt him, he still has a place to depend on and a purpose in life, which is Allah SWT, the Creator.

### **C. Being Patient When Tested by Allah SWT.**

'Ubaidillah Syariff (2002) recited a poem by Rābi‘ah, which she recited when she fell and broke her hand, Rābi‘ah supplicated:

*Allah SWT, my hand is now broken  
I have endured the pains of my body  
and mind,  
abandoned by my parents  
I will accept whatever trials and tribulations You put upon me  
I will patiently accept  
Allah SWT, are you still pleased to accept my weak existence?  
Allah SWT, the question I always wish to clarification,  
do you still love me?*

When Rābi‘ah was a slave, she had supplicated to Allah 'Azza wa Jalla, as mentioned below ('Ubaidillah Syariff, 2002):

*Dear Allah SWT, I am an orphan stranded in torment,  
insulted and trampled upon  
I am now shackled in enslavement  
My freedom has been snatched away  
I will bear all the pain  
I patiently accept and soldier on  
But if greater suffering befalls me  
compared to now, then*

*it would hurt my soul and drain my patience  
my patience is running thin  
Dear Allah SWT, will my worries  
change Your opinion of me?  
Do You still like me?  
Your mercy is the final purpose of my life*

On the next verse of the poem, it reads:

*I will accept whatever tests You put me through  
I will patiently accept*

*I will bear all the pain  
I patiently accept and hold on*

This shows how Rābi‘ah always tried to patiently endure the suffering that afflicted her, whether it was a minor or major suffering. The *Manhaj* Rābi‘ah al-‘Adawīyah approach that she propagated through her poems can be clearly associated with someone who is undergoing unbearable suffering due to mental health issues (depression etc.). Norhafizah Musa and Che Zarrina Sa'ari (2019) believed that uncontrolled stress can cause various mental illnesses, including anxiety, unnecessary worrying, nervousness, sadness, depression and others.

Rābi‘ah had taught her contemporaries and those after her death, to remain strong with Allah SWT with the desired intention, which is to remain patient and accept every test and tribulation they faced. She also emphasised that one must always remember that it is Allah SWT who tests His servants and thus, He reserves the right to do it. A servant should also be tested to assess his level of faith, as exhorted by Allah SWT:

أَحْسِبَ النَّاسُ أَنْ يُتْرَكَوْا ۖ أَنْ يَقُولُوا ۖ ءَامَنَّا وَهُمْ لَا يُفْتَنُونَ<sup>8</sup>

Meaning: “Do people think once they say, “We believe,” that they will be left without being put to the test”?

وَلَقَدْ فَتَنَّا الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا ۖ وَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ الْكٰذِبِينَ<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> Surah *al-Ankabut*, verse 2.

<sup>9</sup> Surah *al-Ankabut*, verse 3.



Meaning: “*We certainly tested those before them. And ‘in this way’ Allah will clearly distinguish between those who are truthful and those who are liars..*”

In addition, Allah SWT has sworn to test the believers with a small test in the form of fear, hunger, lack of possessions, passing of loved ones, crops that are destroyed or failed to grow, but it eventually concluded with some good news for His servants who were patient, as He exhorted below:

وَلَنبَلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالثَّمَرَاتِ ۗ وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ<sup>10</sup>

Meaning: “*And We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger and a loss of wealth and lives and fruits, but give good tidings to the patient*”

The tests are not intended to humiliate the servants but for those who are patient, Allah SWT has exhorted that He will be with each of His patient servants, as mentioned in the verse below:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ<sup>11</sup>

Meaning: *O believers! Seek comfort in patience and prayer. Allah is truly with those who are patient.*

The wisdom behind the test is only meant to judge the honesty and faith of a liars. servant of Allah SWT, regardless if he is a true believer or a pretender to the faith. There are various types of tests from Allah SWT, such as a lack of wealth or finances, taking the lives of loved ones, damaging crops and so on. There are many more tests and tribulations in various forms that Allah SWT can subject His servants to. Therefore, believers will have their faith fully tested. In reality though, Allah SWT is actually instilling the virtue of patience in these people who are tested so that eventually they will remain with Allah SWT (Allah SWT is always with those who are patient)<sup>12</sup>. Allah SWT turns life and death into a test. Thus, the test for Muslims is neither strange nor absurd but it is certain that Muslims will always be tested and the duty of a servant is to face these tests with absolute patience.

#### **D. Showering the love by Allah SWT on His servants**

'Ubaidillah Syariff (2002) stated that the love that grew in Rābi‘ah was caused by the brightness of the inner eye that sees the creation of oneself, as well as the awareness of Allah SWT's love, which never ceased to love her. Rābi‘ah herself remained an eternal virgin because she did not want to divide her love. His lover was solely the

---

<sup>10</sup> Surah *al-Baqarah*, verse 155.

<sup>11</sup> Surah *al-Baqarah*, verse 153.

<sup>12</sup> Surah *al-Baqarah*, verse 153.

beloved Allah SWT who she also loved. Rābi‘ah completely reciprocated her lover's love so much so that she sometimes forgot herself.

When examining the teachings that Rābi‘ah had highlighted, one notices how she wished to convey the message that someone suffering from an illness that leads to depression can be cured by the human heart becoming aware of and feeling the love of Allah SWT. How can that happen? Rābi‘ah responded by saying that when a person is aware of Allah SWT's love for him, everything that is present in his life, no matter in what form, will look beautiful, even pain will feel beautiful. And everything that looks beautiful will not be disappointing or create anxiety.

At-Tirmidzi narrated as follows:

*“And verily Allah, if He loves a people, He tests them. If they are pleased, then God is pleased with them. If they hate it, Allah hates it”*

Allah SWT's love for His servants in this world does not always manifest itself in the form of material gifts or other pleasures. His love can be a test that takes the form of an adverse event, as recorded in the following narration.

عَنْ مُصْعَبِ بْنِ سَعْدٍ عَنْ أَبِيهِ سَعْدِ بْنِ أَبِي وَقَّاصٍ قَالَ قُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَيُّ النَّاسِ أَشَدُّ  
بَلَاءً قَالَ الْأَنْبِيَاءُ ثُمَّ الْأُمَمُ ثُمَّ الْأُمَّمَاتُ يُتْلَى الْعَبْدُ عَلَى حَسَبِ دِينِهِ فَإِنْ كَانَ فِي دِينِهِ ضَلْبًا  
اشْتَدَّ بَلَاؤُهُ وَإِنْ كَانَ فِي دِينِهِ رِقَّةٌ ابْتُلِيَ عَلَى حَسَبِ دِينِهِ فَمَا يَبْرَحُ الْبَلَاءُ بِالْعَبْدِ حَتَّى  
يَشْرَكَهُ يَمْشِي عَلَى الْأَرْضِ وَمَا عَلَيْهِ مِنْ خَطِيئَةٍ

From Mus'ab bin Sa'd, as narrated by his father Sa'd bin Abu Waqas, he said,

*"I asked, "O Messenger of Allah, who is the person who has been tested the most?" The Prophet SAW replied: "The Prophets, then the next group (the most important) and so on. A servant will be tested according to his religion (faith). If his faith is strong, then the test will be more difficult. If his faith is weak then he will be tested according to the extent of his faith. This test will not be lifted from a servant until Allah SWT allows them to walk on the face of the earth without any sins."*<sup>13</sup>

## E. Relenting to Fate

When Rābi‘ah was growing up and with both her parents having passed on, a famine struck the city of Basrah, and she was separated from her older sisters. One day when Rābi‘ah went out of the house, a criminal caught her and sold her for six dirhams.

<sup>13</sup> Narrated by Ibnu Majah No: 4013.

The person who bought Rābi‘ah had forced her to do heavy menial jobs (Farid al-Din Attar 2015).

Although Rabi'ah went through this test in life, 'Ubaidillah Syariff (2002) concluded that relenting to Allah SWT was something that Rabi'ah longed for even though at that time she was facing adversities. She was always afraid that her deeds and worship would not be accepted by Allah SWT. When she was still a slave she used to supplicate to Allah 'Azza wa Jalla, which reads as follows:

*Dear Allah SWT,  
I am an orphan who is stranded, tortured,  
insulted and beaten  
I am now enslaved  
My freedom was taken away  
I will bear all the pain  
I patiently accept and hold on  
but if suffering comes  
which is more painful than I experienced, then  
it will hurt my soul and erode my patience  
I have very little patience left  
Allah SWT, will my concern  
change your view of me?  
Do you still love me?  
Being at your pleasure, is the ultimate goal of my life*

When she fell and broke her arm, she also supplicated as follows:

*Dear Allah SWT, my arm is now broken  
I have endured bodily pain  
and mental pain when abandoned by my parents  
I will accept whatever test You put me through  
I will patiently accept  
Allah SWT, are you still pleased to accept my weak existence,  
Allah SWT, one question I always want to ask  
do you still love me?*

One of the excerpts from the poem above, reads of follows:

*Dear Allah, will my concern  
change your view of me?  
do you still love me?  
Your mercy, is the ultimate goal of my life.  
Allah, are you still pleased to accept my weak existence?  
Allah, the question I always want to make sure  
do you still love me?*

The *Manhaj Tarbiah Rābi‘ah al-‘Adawīyah* approach that she advocated through her poems encouraged people who were facing adversities to continue seeking the mercy of Allah SWT. Rābi‘ah said that a person seeking Allah SWT’s mercy should first relent and accept what Allah SWT has destined for him. ‘Ubaidillah Syariff (2002) mentioned in his book *“Rabi‘ah Al-Adawiyah - Sufi Women and the Love for Allah”*, that Allah SWT’s mercy can be achieved by performing good deeds that please Him and one must also submit to His criteria for obtaining His mercy. In relation to a person who relents, Rābi‘ah was once asked:

*“When does it show that a subject has relented?”*

Rābi‘ah answered:

*“When your suffering is just as joyful as a reward.*

Based on Rābi‘ah’s comments, she believed that a person who relents is a person who feels happy when he receives something pleasurable or when tested by an adversity or accepts all the tests of Allah SWT with an open heart. Farid al-Din Attar (2015) also wrote about relenting as mentioned by Rābi‘ah:

One day, Hasan al-Basri, Malik bin Dinar and Syaqq al-Balkhi visited Rābi‘ah who was lying ill.

*“A person’s words cannot be trusted if he cannot patiently withstand the tests of Allah SWT”*, said Hasan when opening the conversation.

*“Your words indicate that you are an egoistic person”*, Rābi‘ah replied.

Then Syaqq said: *“A person’s words cannot be trusted if he cannot appreciate what Allah SWT has given him.”*

*“There are better things than that,”* said Rābi‘ah.

Malik bin Dinar then said: *“A person’s words cannot be trusted if he is not happy when is tested by Allah SWT.”*

*“There are still better things than that,”* Rābi‘ah repeated her reply. *“If that is so, then tell us,”* they urged Rābi‘ah.

Hence, Rābi‘ah said: *“A person’s words cannot be trusted if he cannot forget the test of Allah SWT when he thinks about Him.”*

Based on Rābi‘ah’s dialogues, she taught the true meaning of relent (*reda*). A person who is afflicted by misfortune should try to remain emotionally calm, and accept whatever Allah SWT has planned. Relenting to every misfortune may be reciprocated with a show of mercy by Allah SWT. The Qur’an states that a person who receives Allah SWT’s mercy will also receive the pleasures of life in the afterlife (Utusan TV, 2021). This is in accordance with the exhortations of Allah SWT in Surah at-Taubah verse 72, meaning:

*“Allah has promised the believers, both men and women, Gardens under which rivers flow, to stay there forever, and splendid homes in the Gardens of Eternity, and—above all—the pleasure of Allah. That is ‘truly’ the ultimate triumph”*

Allah SWT had exhorted that the show of His mercy to His servants is crucial and valued very highly compared to other rewards or recognitions. Whoever obtains it is deemed to have achieved a great victory in life.

#### **F. Remembering Allah SWT Through Prayers (*Solat*) and Supplication (*Doa*)**

An *'abid* is a person who has devoted himself solely to the cause of Allah SWT. Rābi‘ah, being an *'abidah*, was very diligent in worshipping God. She never stopped worshipping Allah SWT because of her deep desire to obtain Allah SWT’s mercy. This is in accordance with a promise she made when she was a slave that when she was free from slavery, she will not stop devoting herself to Allah SWT ('Ubaidillah Syariff, 2002).

This is one of Rābi‘ah’s supplications (*doa*):

*"Oh God, all my hard work and all my desires and among all the pleasures of this world is to remember You. And in the afterlife, among all the pleasures of the afterlife will be to meet You. That is the case with me, as I have said. So now, do as you wish."* (Farid al-Din Attar, 2015)

Based on the supplication above, it indicates that from the very beginning, Rābi‘ah had diligently worshiped Allah SWT by praying, supplicating, reading and appreciating the Qur'an or Hadith, regardless of whether she was in a happy or sad (suffering) state. These acts had also increased her remembrance or recollection of Allah SWT. Therefore, from what she highlighted, this can be a lesson for the people that they must always remember Allah SWT by remaining strong, resilient as well as praying and summoning for His help despite being in a state of disarray, anxious, afraid, or disappointed, especially for those chosen by Allah SWT and tested with depression.

#### **4.0 Conclusion**

Depression is not something to be taken lightly, even belittling a depressed individual should be avoided, hence, the need to evaluate what and how the disorder could affect Muslims. Those affected by depression usually feel insecure, unhappy, as well as unable to control or manage themselves. Muslims should be aware and concerned about the methods required for overcoming their depression so that they can live life as a servant of Allah SWT with a tranquil soul, ready to serve Islam and be obedient to Him. The true love of a Muslim for another Muslim is to love his brother or sister as he loves himself. Hence, this study, which focuses on the spiritual aspect of the *Manhaj Tarbiyah Rābi‘ah al-‘Adawīyah* approach, hopes that depressed individuals can learn something from it and apply it in life. Findings of this study indicate that Islam inseparable from a person’s daily life. The Rābi‘ah al-‘Adawīyah’s approach, in the form of *Mahabbah* or *al-hubb*, is related to divine love and her poems, prayers, supplication and worship have taught us to remain loyal and patient in the face of any adversity.

## References

Abdullah, A., & Omar, Z. (2011). The Effect of Temporal EEG Signals while Listening to Quran Recitation. Paper presented at the International Conference on Advanced Science, Engineering and Information Technology, Putrajaya, Malaysia.

Abdollahzadeh, F., & Abdollohzadeh, N. (2000). The Effect of Voice of Holley Quran to Decrease Aggressive Behaviors in People with AD. *Neurobiology of Aging*, 21, 163.

Abdullah, A. A., & Omar, Z. (2011). The Effect of Temporal EEG Signals while Listening to Quran Recitation. *International Journal on Advanced Science, Engineering and Information Technology*, 1(4), 372-375.

Aghajani, M., & Mirbagher, N. (2012). Comparing The Effect of Holy Quran Recitation and Music on Patient Anxiety and Vital Signs before Abdominal Surgeries. *Islamic Lifestyle Centered on Health*, 1(1), 23-30.

Abdul Aziz, A. R., Shafie, A. A. H., Ali, Z. dan Dzainal, N. D. S. 2020. Pengamalan Nilai Agama dalam Mengatasi Kemurungan Semasa Pandemik COVID-19. *Malaysian Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities (MJSSH)*, 5 (12), pp. 31-44.

Abu Hamida. 2013. *Mukâsyafah al-Qulûb, Bening Hati Dengan Ilmu Tasawuf*. Bandung: Penerbit Marja'

Abu 'Ubaidillah Syariff. 2002. *Kisah Rabi'ah al-Adawiyah Sufi Wanita Dan Aroma Cinta Ilahi*. Kuala Lumpur: Jasmin Enterprise.

Ab Rahman, Z., Awang, J., Ibrahim, M., Mohd Haidhar, K., bin Yusof, M., Kadir, F. A. A. & Mohamed, S. B., (2018). Element of Silent Repetition of Prayers and Self-Reflection or Introspection Approaches in Coping Problematic Behaviors among Adolescents. *International Journal of Civil Engineering and Technology*. 9(7), 261-268.

Ab Rahman, Z., Awang, J., Noor, A.Y.M., Khairuddin, W.H., Ramli, Y.M. (2018). Factor of Religiosity Practices and Islamic Mental-Cognitive Process in Adolescents' at Risk in Bangi. *International Journal of Civil Engineering and Technology (IJCIET)*. IAEME Publication. 9(8), 1140-1145.

Ab Rahman, Z., Kashim, M.I.A.M.\*, Mohd Noor, A.Y., Che Zarrina Saari, Ahmad Zaki Hasan, Abdul Rahim Ridzuan, Ashaari, M. F, Sayyid Buhar Musal Kassim, Norhayati Rafida, A. R. (2020). Critical Review of Religion in Coping Against the Covid-19 Pandemic by Former Covid-19 Muslim Patients in Malaysia, *Journal of Critical Reviews*. 7(5): 1145-1154 Doi: 10.31838/Jcr.07.05.219

Ab Rahman, Z., Mohd Noor, A.Y., Kashim, M.I.A.M., Hasan, A.Z., Saari, C.Z., Ridzuan, A.R., ..., Hussien, H.S. (2020). Critical Review of Reciting Al-Quran in Restoring the Resilience and Mental Health Among Quarantined Covid-19 Patients. *Journal of Critical Reviews*, 7(5), Pp. 1126-1135.

Ab Rahman, Z., Kashim, M.I.A.M., Mohd Noor, A.Y., Saari, C.Z., Hasan, A.Z., Ridzuan, A.R., ..., Norhayati Rafida, A.R. (2020). Critical Review of Religion in Coping Against the Covid-19 Pandemic By Former Covid-19 Muslim Patients In Malaysia. *Journal of Critical Review*, 7(5), Pp. 1145-1154.

Adam Felman. 2020. "Apakah kesihatan mental?" Editor *Medical News Today and Greatist*.

Che Zarrina Saari. 2007. Tokoh Sufi Wanita Rabi`ah Al-`Adawiyah: Motivator Ke Arah Hidup Lebih Bermakna. *Jurnal Usuluddin*, Bil 25. h. 29-43.

Haji Syed Hussin, S. A. 1998. Manhaj: Pengertian dan Kepentingannya Kepada Da'wah. *Jurnal Usuluddin*, 7, 129-146.

Naquib al-Attas. 2022. *Some Aspects of Sufism As Understood and Practised Among the Malays*. Kuala Lumpur: Ta'dib International Sdn Bhd.

Norhafizah Musa, Che Zarrina Sa'ari. 2019. Pendekatan Psikoterapi Islam dalam Menguruskan Tekanan Pesakit Kronik. *Jurnal Usuluddin*, 47 (1), 1-34.  
Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia. 2017. *Laporan Teknikal Prestasi Penjagaan Kesihatan Mental Malaysia 2016*.

Nur Ashidah, Fariza Md Sham. 2020. Sejarah dan Simptom Kemurungan: Kajian Literatur. Vol. 5. No. 1. *Jurnal Sains Insani*.

Siti Asiah. 2020. The Concept of Mahabbah Perspective of Rabi'atul Adawiyah. *Journal of Islamic Studies and Humanities*. Vol. 1 (1), pp. 31-44.

Siti Jamiaah. 2020. Analisis Kritis Terhadap Pandangan Sarjana Dalam Mendefinisikan Manhaj, Uslub Dan Wasilah Dakwah. Vol. 31. *Ulum Islamiyyah The Malaysian Journal of Islamic Sciences*.

Rahmawati. 2018. Rabi'atul Adawiyah Dan Pemikirannya. *Jurnal Al-Munzir*.

Rizem Aizid. 2017. *Cinta Itu Indah*. Editor, Rahman – cet. 1. Yogyakarta: DIVA Press.

Rosni binti Wazir. 2020. Tuntutan Kesihatan Mental Menurut Maqasid Al-Sunnah Persidangan Antarabangsa Isu-Isu Semasa Al-Quran Dan Hadis (THIQAH 2020), Kolej Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Selangor (KUIS).

Purmansyah Ariadi. 2019. Kesehatan Mental dalam Perspektif Islam. *Syifa MEDIKA Jurnal Kedokteran dan Kesehatan*. 3 (2): 118.

Wan Hilmi, Hidayah Zaki. 2020. Gejala Kemurungan: Kaedah Rawatan melalui Pengobatan al-Tibb al-Nabawiy. *Jurnal Islam dan Masyarakat Kontemporari* 21(3): 215-234.

Wasalmi. 2014. Mahabbah Dalam Tasawuf Rabi'ah al-'Adawiah. *Sulesana*. Vol. 9. No. 2.